Attraction of foreign tourists

2401. SHRIS. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our country is still lagging behind countries like China and South East Asian countries in attracting foreign tourists;

(b) if so, the reasons for poor performance of the country on the tourism front alongwith comparative figures of arrival of foreign tourists in India, China and South East Asian Countries during each of the last three years; and

(c) the fresh initiatives proposed to be taken by Government to attract foreign tourists towards our country?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The number of foreign tourist arrivals to India, China and South-East Asian countries during 2004, 2005 and 2006 are given below:—

Country	Foreign Tourist Arrivals (in million)		
	2004	2005	2006
India	3.46	3.92	4.43
China*	41.76	46.81	49.60
South-East Asian Countries*	47.05	49.31	53.76

*Source: UNWTO

The main reasons for less number of tourists visiting India *vis-a-vis* China and South East Asia are lack of adequate tourism infrastructure such as shortage of hotel accommodation and high hotel tariffs, deficiencies in infrastructure such as airports, roads, railways, etc., multiplicity and high level of taxation, restricted land use policies for hotel projects, lack of easy facility of entry of international tourists to India, shortage of air seat capacity, high air fares, etc.

(c) The steps being taken by the Government to attract more foreign tourists to India include :—

- Development of tourist spots under its various schemes of infrastructure development for tourist circuits and destinations;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels;
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions;
- Direct approach to the consumers through Electronic and Print media through the "Incredible India" Campaign;
- Creation of World Class Collaterals;
- Direct co-operative marketing with the Airlines, tour operators and wholesalers overseas;
- According greater focus in the emerging markets particularly in the region of China, North East Asia and South East Asia;
- Participation in Trade Fairs & Exhibitions;
- Optimizing the PR and Publicity;
- Use of Internet and web marketing;
- Generating Tourist Publications; and
- Re-inforced hospitality programmes including grant of air passages to invite the media personnel, tour operators on familiarization tour to India to get first hand knowledge on various tourism products.

Conservation of rain water

2402. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) how much of rain water goes to the seas annually;
(b) whether Government have any plan to conserve this water;